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FAR EAST

3. French propose troop withdrawal as first step toward Korean peace:

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The French working paper for the Korean political conference calls for a gradual withdrawal of foreign forces to precede country-wide elections, the establishment of an all-Korean government, and "reciprocal guarantees." The French assert that unless withdrawal occurred first, free elections would be almost impossible.

As an alternate proposal, the French suggest federation of the existing North-South Korean regimes under international supervision. Dual governmental functions would be eliminated gradually and the neutralization of Korea would be the ultimate goal. The American embassy in London comments that the French may have similar plans in mind for amalgamating the rival regimes in Indochina.

Comment: The primary French proposal differs strikingly from the 29 October British proposal in that it calls for the withdrawal of troops as the first step toward Korean unification. The alternate French proposal bears resemblance to a plan which the British have warned against.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

4. Viet Minh propaganda takes new line:

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A 28 October broadcast from the Viet Minh Peace Committee described the longing of the "Vietnamese people" for peace and friendship with the French

people and their willingness to be linked to the French by economic and cultural ties. The broadcast, which was addressed to the French Peace Committee, blamed ill will on the part of the French negotiators for the failure of the negotiations in 1946 between France and the Viet Minh.

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Comment: This line is a modification of the strongly belligerent tone which the Viet Minh had continued to take despite Peiping and Moscow hints in recent months that a negotiated peace in Indochina might be possible. The adoption of a peace line in this form is probably designed to increase neutralist sentiment in France without committing the Viet Minh authorities to a less belligerent policy.

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WESTERN EUROPE

6. French government's case against Communist deputies stymied:

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The French Parliamentary Immunities Committee's rejection on 29 October of treason charges against four Communist deputies substantially reduces the likelihood of further prosecution, in the opinion of the American embassy in Paris.

The embassy fears that this development will have an adverse effect on further government action against the Communists, whose hand has now been strengthened in their current bid for joint action against the EDC and the Indochina war.

Comment: This decision has been hanging fire since spring, when it first became apparent that the French government's anti-Communist campaign was weakening. Since the government crackdown following the anti-Ridgway demonstrations in May 1952, the Communists have changed their provocative tactics and regained considerable prestige by promoting labor issues without political slogans. They also continue to profit from the Soviet peace offensive.

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